UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1991/NGO/29
12 February 1991

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 12

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Written statement submitted by the World Confederation of Labour, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category I)

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[29 January 1991]

Statement on human and workers' rights in Iran

1. The World Confederation of Labour (WCL) continues to be concerned about the human rights situation, and in particular the condition of workers, in Iran. Numerous reports, including those by official sources of the Islamic Republic of Iran and international organizations, indicate that the abuse of human rights in Iran continues unabated. Since 1981, more than 90,000 political prisoners have been executed and more than 140,000 have been imprisoned and tortured by the present régime for political reasons.

2. An assessment of the list of names and particulars of more than 16,000 victims of political executions since 1981 reveals that about 20 per cent of the victims were blue and white-collar workers who in some way supported the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). Among those executed were Mr. Ahmad Aghaie, who was executed on 6 February 1990 in Tabriz, and Mr. Mohammad Sedegh Azizi, who was executed in 1990 in Tehran. Such executions still continue and are a cause of concern of WCL.

3. A resolution on Iran was ratified by the 22nd Congress of WCL on 24 November 1989 in Caracas, Venezuela. This resolution condemns the grave violation of human rights and workers' rights in Iran and refers to the deplorable conditions in the same year, during which no improvements were made and the most elementary rights of the Iranian people and workers continued to be violated in an unimaginable way. This resolution also expresses support for the NCRI and calls upon its fraternal organizations to adopt similar stances in respect of Iran.

4. Many international and human rights organizations have in the past strongly and on numerous occasions condemned the violation of human rights in Iran. Among those, one can mention resolution 1990/9 passed by the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on 30 August 1990. Whilst welcoming such resolutions, the WCL calls upon the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to take similar steps.

5. In the past 10 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has continuously used summary executions in its foreign and domestic policies. The continuation of this policy by the authorities in Iran can only indicate their contempt for human rights.

6. In April 1990, the World Confederation of Labour learnt about the assassination of Professor Kazem Rajavi, a well-known human rights advocate and the representative of the Iranian Resistance in Switzerland. As confirmed by the Swiss Justice officials, all the evidence converges on the direct involvement of one or more official Iranian services in this murder. Swiss investigations also established the identities of 13 of the Iranian régime's terrorists carrying service passports marked "on assignment". We were deeply shocked and regret the loss of this well-known dignitary who devoted his life to the cause of human rights and resistance for peace and democracy in Iran.

7. The WCL is deeply concerned about the execution of hundreds of people by the Iranian régime since January 1990. These executions have been confirmed by the State-run press. These include the public hanging of 48 people on 5 September 1990 in Mashad. Various reports indicate that many of the victims of public executions in different Iranian towns are political prisoners who are publicly executed to create an atmosphere of fear among the people.

8. The present régime, by its own explicit admission, is pursuing and will continue to pursue Khomeini's policies, as confirmed by the remarks made on 17 May 1989 by Rafsanjani, who said "the spirit of our country's policies is that course set by the late Imam [Khomeini]". More than a year and a half after these remarks, we witness an escalation in the violation of human rights

in Iran and terrorism outside Iran. These abuses have continued particularly in the wake of the first visit to Iran by the United Nations Special Representative, and the content of his deplorable report has been revealed for the public's judgement in the book "Human Rights Betrayed". There is no doubt that the current régime in Iran does not tolerate any changes in way of respecting human rights, democracy, freedom, and fulfilment of workers' rights.

9. The violations of the rights of the Iranian people especially those of workers have continued through the United Nations Special Representative's second visit in October. Unfortunately, the United Nations team, while in Iran, reportedly limited its activities to meetings with the régime's officials, rather than visiting the mass graves, prisons, and torture chambers where hundreds of workers have been buried or detained.

10. The shortcomings of Mr. Galindo Pohl's second mission and subsequent report notwithstanding, he has to some extent in his latest report corrected the errors of the earlier report. The Special Representative has explicitly stated in his November report that human rights violations continue in the Islamic Republic of Iran and that the number of officially announced executions far exceeds internationally recognized norms. He has reported that torture, censorship, and repression continue to be imposed by government agents, and the climate of terror is such that even parliamentary deputies do not dare to openly express their views.

11. When being tried, a great many defendants are deprived of their right to counsel, and in general attorneys are afraid to take on political cases. Consequently, the majority of trials are not genuine.

12. The November report also clearly demonstrates that Mr. Galindo Pohl's visit to Iran was orchestrated by the ruling régime, for which reason his requests to visit Gohardasht Prison and meet with a number of prisoners were denied.

13. Flagrant violations of workers' rights in Iran, including gross infringements of the few conventions to which Iran is a signatory, continue unabated. Workers are not allowed to organize, to defend their rights, or to protest. The only trade unions allowed to operate in Iran are affiliated with the régime and are used to further the State's repression of workers.

14. In meetings between the Special Representative and such so-called workers' representatives, the individuals' statements were all favourable to the régime, albeit the rampant hardships, torture and executions of Iran's workers. Such flattering testimony only confirms that the said agencies are government-run and the visits stage-managed.

15. The situation of women in the Islamic Republic of Iran is so appalling that it defies appraisal in accordance with recognized norms. Women are not only deprived of their fundamental rights, as are men, but in accordance with the prevailing view, are essentially regarded as second-class citizens.

16. The representative of the "Organization of Iranian Women" told the Special Representative in a meeting that women's "only complaint was that not all Islamic rules were as yet fully implemented. They thought it a cruelty to pretend that men and women are equal, since the two sexes had very distinct characteristics". Like its counterpart "labour unions", this made-to-order organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran propagates the notion of women as second-class citizens rather than defending the rights of Iran's women.

17. Elsewhere, the Special Representative's report notes that "women in the Islamic Republic of Iran have suffered from various acts of discrimination ... A husband, father or brother may kill his wife, daughter or sister when she commits an immoral or unchaste act ... A woman's testimony in court was considered to be worth half that of a man", and a father has the right to "marry off his young [nine-year-old] daughter to anyone he considers suitable, in exchange for a sum of money".

18. Iranian women must work more for less wages while also bearing the heavy responsibilities of the home. In addition, they are banned from numerous professions, including becoming judges.

19. WCL, as in the past, condemns the present régime in Iran for its violation of workers' and human rights. WCL expresses its support for the NCRI for the establishment of democracy and freedom in Iran. WCL reiterates its call on the Commission on Human Rights to condemn the Iranian régime for flagrant and continuing violation of the most basic human rights. While commemorating Professor Kazem Rajavi, who was active for many years in international bodies, including the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, WCL strongly condemns his assassination.